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FIRST COUNTRY COOPERATION FRAMEWORK FOR CAMEROON (1997-2001)

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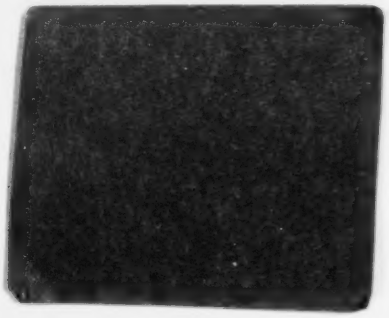

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INTRODUCTION

1. This country cooperation framework (CCF), which was prepared by the Government of Cameroon in close cooperation with the UNDP office, defines the priority areas for the utilization of resources earmarked during the sixth cycle for the promotion of sustainable human development in Cameroon.

2. In addition to involving national substantive departments cooperating with UNDP, the preparation of the country framework mobilized the United Nations specialized agencies as a whole, Cameroon's bilateral and multilateral development partners, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society. A number of sector-specific and general meetings were held, the most important of which were the seminar/workshop organized in August 1996 on new arrangements to internalize the CCF preparation process, propose areas for intervention and establish a timetable and the meeting of the expanded programme committee held in January 1997 to discuss the advisory note.

3. The most recent national policy documents served as background material for the preparation of the CCF, namely, the Government's medium-term economic and social policy strategy, the 1995/1996 Law on Finance and the 1996 Public Investment Plan; other documents used included such UNDP publications as the national human development reports, the 1994 and 1995 development cooperation reports, the report on the mid-term review, World Bank publications, the most recent of which is entitled "Cameroon: Diversity, Growth and Poverty Alleviation", as well as monographs, plans and reports issued by various entities of the United Nations system, in particular, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Multinational Programming and Operational Centre (MULPOC) of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the International Labour Organization (ILO). Lastly, the proceedings and recommendations of recent major United Nations conferences also were taken into account.

I. DEVELOPMENT SITUATION FROM A SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

A. Increased poverty and unemployment

4. After 1986, Cameroon was adversely affected by the decline of the world economy. In order to restore macroeconomic balance, the Government took steps to stabilize domestic finances and, as from 1989, adopted a number of structural adjustment plans which received the support of the international financial community. The recession nevertheless persisted, bringing with it a decline in income and low prices. In particular, income from agriculture declined some 70 per cent in 1989, followed in 1993 by a similar decline in civil service salaries. It was not until late 1994 that this deflationary process ended and positive growth resumed, as a result of the economy's rebound following the devaluation of the CFA franc.

5. Cameroon has a high level of public debt. During the crisis, budget deficits and external deficits were financed by sizeable loans. In late 1995, external debt represented 110 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). Debt servicing in 1996/1997 is expected to absorb two thirds of the country's export earnings. Against this background, official development assistance (ODA) decreased, declining from $577 million in 1993 to $265 million in 1994, a decrease of 54 per cent. The bulk of ODA is allocated to economic management, while the modest amounts available for health (3.3 per cent) and human resources development (4.5 per cent) are an indication that sectors crucial for reducing poverty have been marginalized. The Government thus must confront an increase in poverty without the means to tackle the problem.

6. With a view to consolidating the economic recovery, the Government and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are engaged in negotiations on an enhanced structural adjustment facility (ESAF) based on a macroeconomic assessment calling for the reduction of inflation to 2 per cent, the continuation of a prudent wage policy and a growth rate of 5 per cent.

B. Human Resources Development

7. With regard to the health sector, health infrastructure (which is relatively inadequate) is unequally distributed in Cameroon. The situation is aggravated by poor management of health services and a shortage of personnel and equipment in existing health training facilities. The delay in establishing a national pharmaceutical policy and in creating a national centre to supply essential generic medications has hampered access by the poorest segments of the population to high-quality medications. With respect to education, resources are not allocated to the country's ten provinces in a balanced manner. For example, 70 per cent of the nursery school infrastructure is found in three of the ten provinces, compared with 30 per cent in the seven remaining provinces. School attendance has declined substantially as a result of the economic crisis.

C. Creating viable livelihoods

8. The recruitment freeze in the civil service and cutbacks in the private and parapublic sectors led to increased unemployment at a time when the number of young people entering the labour market was increasing. The informal sector, which has grown substantially, is a source of concern for the Government. Recourse to labour-intensive jobs as a short-term job creation measure is severely restricted by a low capital budget, given the constraints of the structural adjustment programme. Against this background, the Government has launched two initiatives with various donors, including UNDP: the priority programme for the promotion of small- and medium-scale enterprises, and the subprogramme on support structures for growers' organizations, cooperatives and groups, which are in a good position to create jobs.

D. Gender equality

9. In 1995 the population of Cameroon was estimated at approximately 13 million people, 52 per cent of whom were female. Nearly all women work in the primary sector (84 per cent), and 92 per cent of these are in the agricultural sector, where they produce 90 per cent of the country's food. However, women face a number of hardships, including a lack of education, under-representation of girls at all educational levels, under-representation of women in the civil service, and difficulty securing access to the means of production, including credit and land. In the economic sphere, women are heavily concentrated in the informal sector, particularly as small traders, but their jobs are more precarious and they receive much lower wages.

E. Environment

10. Many socioeconomic factors threaten the environment and may be attributed primarily to human activities which pollute the air, water and land. Soil degradation is caused by inappropriate farming practices and the improper use of herbicides and chemical fertilizers. Moreover, poverty has been recognized to be at the root of severe environmental degradation; in order to ensure their survival, people resort to what is often an anarchical exploitation of natural resources. Deforestation has become a more serious problem in recent years, not only because of the expansion of agricultural plots to meet the needs of an increasing population, but also, because of the substantial growth of the timber export industry.

F. Governance

11. The public sector is characterized by the excessive centralization of power and poor coordination resulting from overlapping among certain functions. The new constitution points to decentralization as one means of accelerating development. The decentralization process will focus on establishing relatively autonomous regions in the place of existing provinces, efforts to combat corruption and greater transparency in the management of government affairs; in short, the establishment of good governance henceforth will be considered a prerequisite for promoting sustainable human development.

II. RESULTS AND LESSONS OF PAST COOPERATION

A. Results

12. The Government's priorities for cooperation with UNDP during the fifth cycle were: (a) economic management; (b) promotion of small- and medium-scale enterprises in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors; (c) protection and management of the environment and (d) various activities, including support for efforts to combat acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and assistance with various projects relating to the integration of women in development: women and food technology; participation at the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing; and support for a factory which processes manioc grown by women. UNDP

contributed an estimated $25 million to these priority sectors and to help the Government coordinate development assistance.

1. Economic management

13. Under the national technical cooperation assessment and programmes (NATCAP) project, a development assistance coordinating committee chaired by the Prime Minister was established in January 1995 and the members of the committee have officially been appointed. Such structures are essential for the effective management and coordination of aid, which require further strengthening with UNDP support. Advocacy efforts vis-à-vis the Government concerning sustainable human development met with success and led to the establishment of a programme to support and monitor sustainable human development, the objective of which is to enable the State systematically to monitor patterns in development indicators.

2. Environment

14. The Government has elaborated a national environmental management plan for Cameroon with the support of UNDP and contributions from the World Bank and other donors. The Framework Law on the Environment drafted under this plan was adopted by the National Assembly in 1996. Various natural resource management initiatives deal with the development and adoption of a policy on forests and the formulation of a general management strategy for parks and reserves. The Forest Code, which is periodically updated, articulated principles and established procedures for conservation-oriented resource management.

3. Small- and medium-scale enterprises

15. The execution of the priority programme to promote small- and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) was delayed during the fifth cycle. The programme is now in place and is benefiting from the impetus imparted by a tripartite partnership between donors, professionals and the Government within the framework of a joint committee. The State-financed and managed institutional machinery designed to promote SMEs, which constitute the most fragile component of the private sector, disappeared completely during the crisis. This machinery must be replaced as soon as possible.

B. Lessons learned

16. The assistance provided by UNDP has had a positive impact in both strategic and operational terms. The introduction of the programme approach was well received and yielded encouraging results. The preparation and publication of three national reports on sustainable human development (1991, 1993 and 1996) played a positive role in internalizing the paradigm of sustainable human development in Cameroon.

17. Experience has demonstrated that it is useful to promote the programme approach during the formulation, implementation and mobilization of resources from other donors. The approach strengthens the participatory process as the best way to formulate, execute and monitor programmes in order to ensure their lasting impact.

III. PROPOSED STRATEGY AND THEMATIC AREAS

A. Global strategy for the implementation of UNDP support

18. UNDP resources will be used to support the Government's efforts to counter the increase in poverty occasioned by the economic developments described above. The Government plans to promote job creation, allocate additional resources for education and primary health care and continue the promotion and integration of women in development. Special emphasis will be placed on strengthening national capacities for the coordination and management of external assistance and for programme planning and execution.

19. As to methodology, a two-pronged approach will be adopted: (a) central Government capacities will be strengthened in order to establish effective management and monitoring systems emphasizing technical rigour, transparency and accountability, with a view to creating an optimal climate for the attainment of sustainable human development; and (b) grass-roots capacity will be strengthened within civil society, NGOs and community-based organizations in order to promote the mobilization of society and the effective participation of vulnerable population groups, who will play an active role in efforts to combat poverty and will benefit from those efforts.

B. Priority areas of intervention

1. Programme to support and monitor sustainable human development

20. The objective of this programme is to strengthen the analytical capacity of the Government with respect to public investment by: (a) introducing improved methodology to allow the more effective identification, quantification and selection of sectoral investment programmes which take sustainable human development into account; (b) ensuring that macroeconomic policies and sectoral policies are consistent with the goal of sustainable human development; (c) establishing institutional support to strengthen coordination between central and regional structures and facilitate exchanges with NGOs and the private sector; and (d) establishing a national information database on sustainable human development indicators in order to measure and assess the impact of national programmes. An amount of $1 million will be earmarked for this purpose.

2. Programme to support the national poverty alleviation strategy

21. Poverty alleviation is a priority objective of the Government's economic and social policy, a goal which enjoys the support of all its international

partners. Poverty is a problem particularly in rural areas, major urban centres and among certain vulnerable groups, in particular, women and children.

22. UNDP resources allocated to this area will be used primarily as a catalyst to mobilize additional financing. Under the programme, the Government will elaborate a national poverty alleviation strategy by, inter alia, strengthening opportunities and capacity to manage external debt more prudently and reducing its impact on the national economy and on the poverty alleviation effort (see para. 6). Another strategy focuses on promoting the private sector as an agent for job creation in small- and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs). This national strategy should make it possible to facilitate the coordination of poverty alleviation activities and mobilize additional resources from other donors.

23. UNDP will work to promote the integration of men and women in development by assisting the ministerial department responsible for social matters in the formulation and execution of the plan of action elaborated following the Beijing Conference. Steps also will be taken to strengthen the role women play in planning, including within NGOs and civil society, and to finance a number of micro-projects for women and other vulnerable groups. Other donors plan to finance poverty alleviation programmes focusing primarily on the development of rural infrastructures (rural roads, water supply projects, health and rural markets). Financing in this area will amount to $1.5 million.

3. Governance

24. With the entry into force of the new constitution, Cameroon began to implement institutional reforms to promote the appropriate conduct of public affairs. Accordingly, it was decided to move beyond the programme to strengthen public service management capacity, which, with the support of the management capacity development programme, financed administrative reform and to establish a programme to strengthen governance. Under this programme, the Government plans to address three major ethical and political challenges: (a) adapting tasks to the requirements of a democratic and liberal society, taking into account the constraints which structural adjustment requirements place on the economy; (b) ensuring that the actors responsible for management are subject to the rules of law and of the democratic ethic: transparency, accountability, legal supervision and access to information; and (c) introducing a decentralization process by creating regions with greater autonomy. To this end, UNDP headquarters has approved the document on the preparatory phase of the governance programme, which henceforth will be financed by Norwegian funds in the amount of $500,000. An additional allocation of $1.57 million from the target for resource assignment from the core (TRAC) will be made during the sixth cycle.

4. Development of the private sector: promotion of small- and medium-scale enterprises

25. Following the work which began during the fifth cycle, the priority programme to promote SMEs will strive to enhance opportunities for the establishment and development of small- and medium-scale enterprises in rural

and urban areas, with an emphasis on the following: (a) strengthening entrepreneurs' associations and the dialogue between SMEs and their partners; (b) strengthening the operational capacity of SMEs - training, advisory services, new markets and information for and about SMEs; (c) improvement of the legal and fiscal environment for SMEs; (d) resource mobilization - guarantees, joint performance bonds, qualitative and quantitative improvement of financial structures; (e) actions targeting women and vulnerable groups, namely, youth and the disabled. Action also will be taken to promote the establishment and development of SMEs in those sectors and areas in which the impact on poverty alleviation will be most pronounced. These include rural areas and the perimeter of urban areas - home to 40 per cent of the economically active population - in which small business owners have difficulty securing access to financing and credit for investments with which to establish or develop their enterprises.

26. The technical support which the specialized agencies of the United Nations, including UNIDO, FAO and ILO, provide to the programme will be maintained and extended with the mobilization of the International Trade Centre of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The programme currently receives or is slated to receive support from the European Union, Belgium, Canada, France (French Development Fund/Fund for Assistance and Cooperation) and Japan. The programme will be continued and will receive $2 million in funding.

4. Environment and natural resources management

27. The role of UNDP at the country and grass-roots level will be to provide institutional support for the implementation machinery responsible for the national environmental management plan, in order to strengthen its capacity to manage, draft legislation and supply information, as well as to finance a limited number of environmental micro-projects. With specific reference to support for grass-roots organizations, environmental action within the framework of the Africa 2000 Network programme and the national environment fund (Global Environment Fund/Small Grants Programme, GEF/SGP) will be strengthened under a new cross-disciplinary monitoring and assessment project using national volunteers. In addition, UNDP financing will serve as a catalyst to encourage additional donors to finance the national environmental management plan.

28. Within Central Africa, a programme on environmental and natural resources management involving the seven countries of the region is in preparation. Under the programme, a regional approach will be developed to the management of the environment and shared natural resources (for example, forest reserves). UNDP funds may be used to support the execution of the programme in Cameroon. The ongoing programme financed by GEF for the integrated management of the Lake Chad basin will continue during the cycle. The environmental component will receive $900,000 in financing.

C. Other areas of assistance

1. Integrating men and women in development

29. In all ongoing or planned programmes in the priority areas targeted, special attention has been paid to fostering an awareness of gender equality through actions which favour women in sectors in which they continue to be under-represented, for example: (a) the priority programme for SMEs called for special assistance for women who establish businesses; (b) the micro-project component of the environment programme established by the Africa 2000 Network and the GEF Small Grants Programme will set aside funds for women's groups; (c) the programme to support and monitor sustainable human development will lead to the introduction of tools for preparing poverty profiles and measuring results obtained with respect to poverty alleviation by placing special emphasis on the status of women; (d) the participation component of the governance programme will focus on effectively integrating women in the management of public affairs.

30. Each programme will be required to incorporate gender equality monitoring strategies. UNDP will be asked to support the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Status of Women in formulating and implementing the post-Beijing national strategy and in responding to the needs of civil society and NGOs with respect to gender equality issues. UNDP will continue its partnership in this area with UNICEF and UNFPA and will continue to cofinance ongoing projects with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), particularly for the purpose of encouraging the establishment of small women-owned businesses in rural areas. An amount of $900,000 has been allocated for this purpose.

2. Support to combat AIDS

31. In the light of the difficulties encountered in mobilizing resources for activities to combat AIDS, UNDP, as the coordinator of the Joint and Cosponsored United Nations Programme on AIDS (UNAIDS), will be called upon to assist the Government in mobilizing additional resources to combat the pandemic and strengthen the coordination function of the national programme to combat aids. In addition to the specialized agencies of the United Nations participating in UNAIDS, a number of bilateral donors and NGOs are active in this field and the Government hopes to strengthen and systematize this partnership, which is led by the World Health Organization (WHO) with UNDP support. An amount of $500,000 will be allocated for this purpose.

3. Strategic reserve

32. When they allocated the funds among the various sectors, the Government and UNDP agreed to establish a strategic reserve of $900,000 to fund the final preparations for and the initial activities of the national disaster management programme. The reserve also will be used to introduce reforms in rural organizations and undertake other unanticipated special activities for which the Government indicates support is required.

IV. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

A. Implementation and execution

33. The programme approach provided the Government with an effective tool for coordinating external assistance, at least in the sectors covered by national programmes. National execution, which will continue under the new programme, by no means rules out recourse to the specialized agencies of the United Nations. Their participation will be sought bearing in mind their comparative advantages, the overall objective being to strengthen national capacities. A network of national expertise has been established and recourse to international experts will be limited to cases in which the required skills are not available in Cameroon. The introduction of the United Nations Volunteers programme will make it possible to take advantage of another category of national skills. All project and programme personnel must first receive training in UNDP financial procedures. The project to support national execution will be developed within the context of the programme to monitor sustainable human development.

B. Supervision, evaluation and reporting

34. The Government, in cooperation with UNDP, will undertake multidisciplinary and multisectoral reviews of each programme or theme. In addition, all national coordinators will hold follow-up meetings to take stock of action taken and problems encountered and to exchange ideas on the impact of ongoing actions. A systematic accounts verification system will be introduced with a view to conducting annual audits of national programmes. Annual and biennial assessment reports will be prepared to measure progress achieved. A mid-term review of the programme and an in-depth assessment prior to its conclusion will be conducted.

Annex

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION TARGET TABLE FOR CAMEROON (1997-2001)

(In thousands of United States dollars)

Source	Amount	Comments
UNDP CORE FUNDS		
Estimated IPF carry-over	677	
TRAC 1.1.1	9 270	Assigned immediately to country.
TRAC 1.1.2	0 to 66.7 per cent of TRAC 1.1.1	This range of percentages is presented for initial planning purposes only. The actual assignment will depend on the availability of high-quality programmes. Any increase in the range of percentages would also be subject to availability of resources.
Other resources	300	SPR (200 for programme to strengthen forest management capacity; 100 for establishment of networks for sustainable development).
SPPD/STS	486	
Subtotal	10 733 a/	
OTHER UNDP FUNDS		
Government cost-sharing	-	
Sustainable development funds	of which:	
GEF	580	
Africa 2000	290	
Third-party cost-sharing	300	Grant from Government of Japan to strengthen SME programmes.
Funds, trust funds and other		
UNIFEM	122	
Subtotal	1 292	
GRAND TOTAL	12 025 a/	

a/ Not inclusive of TRAC 1.1.2, which is allocated regionally for subsequent country application.

Abbreviations: GEF = Global Environment Facility; IPF = indicative planning figure; SPPD = support for policy and programme development; SME = small- and medium-scale enterprises; SPR = Special Programme Resources; STS = support for technical services; TRAC = target for resource assignment from the core; UNIFEM = United Nations Development Fund for Women.